



INTRODUCTION

An array of hazard resiliency studies and management efforts were initiated throughout the Gulf of Mexico in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. The Coastal Storms Program (CSP) acknowledges these contributions and will serve to leverage partnerships, increase coordination, outreach and extension activities regarding the tools and services in the Gulf of Mexico.

The CSP is a nationwide effort to help coastal residents reduce the impacts storms have on their families, communities, property and environment.

The program has a history of providing a broad array of tools and services in the pilot areas, which have included improved observing systems, forecast models, decision support tools, outreach and extension activities and enhanced community resilience.

AUDIENCE

The Gulf of Mexico CSP pilot will serve Alabama, Mississippi and eastern Louisiana. The primary outreach audience includes:

- Emergency and floodplain managers
- Natural resource managers
- State and local planners
- Land- and estuarine-use managers
- Local elected officials

The secondary audiences include:

- Chambers of Commerce
- Residents
- Developers/contractors
- Port authorities
- Academic research communities
- Community organizations

PARTNERSHIPS

The short-term success of the Gulf of Mexico CSP will depend on new coastal storms partnerships. For example,

the CSP is expected to provide direct benefits to the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) Coastal Resiliency Working Groups. Long-term success will depend on demonstrating the value of the program to potential funding partners.

PRIORITY AREAS

The Gulf of Mexico CSP aims to provide better communication, awareness and understanding of issues surrounding land use and development.

The program also focuses on how planning decisions affect impact from storms. Priority topics include:

- Ecological impacts of coastal storms on aquatic ecosystems
- Hazard mitigations, evacuation and storm surge
- Community best practices in mitigating hazards impacts and related problems (evacuation, runoff)

Preliminary coastal storm research priorities include:

- Assessing storm-related water-quality issues for aquatic ecosystems and promoting the best management practices
- Determining the economic benefits of estuarine wetlands and hazard buffers
- Participating in the National Ocean Service's Gulf of Mexico Storm Surge Partnership Project, which aims to help coastal communities mitigate damages and reduce loss of life, property and ecosystems
- Developing resiliency/human dimension tools
- Creating land-use and land-cover change maps, floodplain elevation maps and bathymetry maps
- Determining pre-storm damage estimates
- Developing safer storm harbor models
- Investigating availability of self-insurance
- Determining hazard impacts
- Determining hazard mitigation



For information about the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Storms Program, contact the Coastal Storms Outreach Coordinator at (228) 818-8829.

CSP TOOLS

Other CSP programs (in Florida, the Pacific Northwest and southern California) have developed the following tools and products:

- New estuarine circulation models to improve storm planning, response and maritime safety
- Enhanced oceanographic and meteorological observations and new models to improve forecasting models
- Risk and vulnerability assessments to identify potential hazards
- Flood evacuation models
- Ecological assessments to determine and mitigate threats to the environment

All regional CSPs have identified a need for an outreach and education component. The Gulf of Mexico CSP will ensure that:

- Products are developed based on locally identified needs and that appropriate user groups know about the availability of products.
- Users are trained on the use of the tools.
- Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium (MASGC) will collect feedback from CSP partners and user groups on product effectiveness and recommendations for improvements.

OBJECTIVES

To help reduce the impact of coastal storms, the CSP in the Gulf of Mexico will focus on the following objectives and targeted completion dates:

- Design a CSP outreach and education program that will introduce people to storms tools, information and partnerships. (2008).
- Complete an inventory of land-use models, risk and vulnerability tools, storm-related workshops and training and partners, and produce a Coastal Storm Resource Directory. (2008).

- Implement a grants program for local and regional partners. The grants will lead to the development of three new tools, products and services and build capacity for 10 coastal storms partners. (2009).
- Deliver the CSP outreach and education program to more than 200,000 constituents. (2010).
- Conduct evaluations of coastal storms program products and services. (2010).
- Establish mechanisms to continue the CSP effort and partnerships beyond the pilot period.

OUTCOMES

- An advisory council will be established to assist in identifying and prioritizing needs, reviewing research projects and expanding partnerships.
- A network of outreach educators will be used to expand the efforts of the Coastal Storms outreach coordinator.
- Several coastal communities will complete a self-assessment of their disaster preparedness using a resiliency index questionnaire.
- People will download information (resource directory, tools, fact sheets, etc.) from the Gulf of Mexico CSP Web site.
- People will receive coastal storms information from newsletters, newspaper articles, the CSP Web site or radio/television.
- Training meetings will be held on the use of CSP tools and products.
- At least three CSP research projects will be funded.
- Regional and state coastal storm partnerships will be built through a development grant program.

CONTACT

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